



News Release

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PRESCHOOL FOR ALL TO GIVE CALIFORNIA KIDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE

First 5 California Announces \$100 Million Toward Voluntary Preschool for All

SAN MATEO – First 5 California today announced an investment of \$100 million to implement voluntary Preschool for All, marking one of the first steps toward ensuring that all 3- and 4-year-olds have access to the early learning experiences they need to grow, develop and reach their greatest potential in school and in life.

“For every dollar invested in preschool, we get \$7 back in reduced crime, welfare and special education costs,” said Rob Reiner, chair of First 5 California, the State Commission charged with distributing Prop. 10 tobacco taxes. “First 5 California’s investment in Preschool for All helps build a foundation toward ensuring that every child has the option to go to preschool. It will also demonstrate how preschool builds brighter futures for kids—and for all of California.”

Studies show that for every dollar invested in early learning programs, quality child care and preschool, the public saves \$7.14 in crime, welfare dependency and other costs. Additionally, children in high-quality preschool programs are also projected to make roughly \$143,000 more over their lifetimes than those who didn’t take part in the programs.

Quality preschool gives children the tools and experiences they need to thrive in kindergarten. Children who attend quality preschools do better in reading and math, develop better social and emotional skills and have more self-confidence. They are also more likely to graduate from high school, less likely to become involved in crime and less likely to have unwanted pregnancies in their teens. Given the state’s budget situation, Preschool for All is a smart investment.

The \$100 million investment is an important beginning toward implementation of Preschool for All as described in the California Legislature’s Master Plan for Education. The initiative aims to increase the number of high-quality preschool spaces in the state to provide voluntary access to preschool for all children, essentially creating an education system in California that begins at preschool and goes to grade 12.

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Since First 5 LA announced an investment of \$100 million toward universal access to preschool last year, two additional counties have moved forward with plans to develop programs, First 5 San Mateo and First 5 Alpine. First 5 San Mateo has invested more than \$10 million toward the San Mateo County Universal Preschool Initiative in an effort to provide increased access to high-quality early care and education for all 3- and 4-year-olds in the county. With a focus on underserved areas, the program aims to initially target low-income children, children with special needs and disabilities and other at-risk children, but is firmly committed to increasing access to high-quality preschool services for all San Mateo County families.

“In partnership with First 5 California, we are leveling the playing field for the children of San Mateo County so all children can begin their first day of school with the confidence and skills that will serve them well all the way through to graduation,” said Kris Perry, executive director of First 5 San Mateo.

In partnership with the Alpine County Superintendent of Schools, First 5 Alpine has set aside more than \$500,000 to establish the Early Learning Center. The new facility will make it possible to bring together several programs in one location, including year-round before- and after-school early learning programs and infant and preschool care.

In California, there are an estimated 3.5 million children under age 5 and approximately one million are between the ages of 3 and 4. According to recent studies, more than 50 percent of babies born in California are Latino, 10 percent are Asian Pacific Islander and seven percent are African American. The shortage of quality preschools is felt most strongly in ethnic communities. By increasing access to voluntary Preschool for All, First 5 California is working to meet the educational needs of California’s diverse children by giving them an equal opportunity to receive the necessary preparation to enter school learning and be better students throughout their school years.

First 5 California, also known as the California Children and Families Commission, was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund education, health, child care and other programs for expectant parents and children up to age 5. Prop. 10 was designed to address the lack of public funding and support for early childhood development in the wake of a growing body of scientific evidence indicating that the emotional, physical, social and developmental environments to which children are exposed have a profound impact on their ability to reach their greatest potential in school and to become productive members of society.